











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1. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE BY MARVIN MILES APPEARED IN THE LOS ANGELES TIMES 7 JAN 1967 WITH A PICTURE OF THE AIRPLANE ON THE FRONT PAGE.

2,000-M.P.H. PLANE MISSING IN NEVADA

A 2,000-M.P.H. RECONNAISSANCE JET, FASTEST OPERATIONAL AIRCRAFT IN THE WORLD AND SUCCESSOR TO THE U-2 SPY PLANE, IS MISSING AND PRESUMED LOST IN A REMOTE NEVADA AREA EAST OF LAS VEGAS, THE AIR FORCE REPORTED FRIDAY.

SPOKESMEN AT EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE SAID AN EXPERIMENTAL MODEL OF THE TRIPLE-SONIC SR-71 WAS UNREPORTED SINCE 4.P.M. THURSDAY ON A ROUTINE TEST MISSION. AT THAT TIME IT HAD FUEL FOR ONLY 90 MINUTES OF FLIGHT.

THE BIG, JAVELIN-SHAPED LOCKHEED PLANE WAS FLOWN BY A COMPANY TEST PILOT WHO WAS NOT IDENTIFIED PENDING DETERMINATION OF HIS

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FATE.

AN AIR SEARCH OF THE DESOLATE NEVADA TERRAIN WAS UNDERTAKEN LATE THURSDAY AND CONTINUED FRIDAY, BUT BY NIGHTFALL THERE HAD BEEN NO REPORTS ON EITHER THE PLANE OR THE PILOT.

THE EXPERIMENTAL SR-71--PRESUMABLY MODIFIED AS AN ADVANCED MODEL OF THE BASIC PLANE--WAS THE SECOND AIRCRAFT OF THIS TYPE TO CRASH ALTHOUGH THE FIRST WAS NOT DESTROYED.

ITS TWO LOCKHEED CREWMEN EJECTED OVER NEW MEXICO DURING AN UNIDENTIFIED AIR EMERGENCY A YEAR AGO AND THE SLEEK, BLACK PLANE REPORTEDLY LANDED ALMOST INTACT PLOWING INTO SOFT EARTH IN VIRTUALLY LEVEL FLIGHT.

ONE TEST PILOT, JAMES T. ZWAYER OF LANCASTER, WAS KILLED IN PARACHUTING FROM THE CRAFT. THE OTHER, WILLIAM A. WEAVER OF NORTH-RIDGE, SURVIVED WITH MINOR INJURIES.

ASSIGNED TO THE 9TH STRATEGIC RECONNAISSANCE WING AT BEALE AFB IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, THE 102-FOOT-LONG, CAMERA-CARRYING AIRCRAFT ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED CLOSE-UP AND FEW DETAILS OF THE PLANE HAVE BEEN RELEASED.

IT IS KNOWN THAT THE SHARK-LIKE PLANES, PAINTED JET BLACK TO OFFSET THE 600-DEGREE HEAT GENERATED BY THEIR TRIPLE-SONIC SPEED, HAVE A MISSION TIED IN WITH THE STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND, BASICALLY TO RECONNOITER THE RESULTS OF U.S. RETALIATION STRIKES IN A NUCLEAR WAR--AND SEEK OUT NEW TARGETS.

DISCLOSED IN 1964

SPECULATION THAT THE SR-71 MAY ALSO BE FLYING SKY-SPY MISSIONS

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FOR THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AS DID THE U-2 BEFORE IT WAS SHOT DOWN OVER RUSSIA HAS EVOKED NO COMMENT FROM MILITARY OR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

THE SR-71 WAS FIRST DISCLOSED BY PRESIDENT JOHNSON IN JULY, 1964, AS A NEW LONG-RANGE MILITARY RECONNAISSANCE PLANE HE DESCRIBED AS THE "MOST ADVANCED IN THE WORLD," CAPABLE OF SPEEDS MORE THAN THREE TIMES THAT OF SOUND (2,800 M.P.H.) AND ALTITUDES OF MORE THAN 80,000 FEET.

THIS WAS FIVE MONTHS AFTER THE PRESIDENT HAD ANNOUNCED A NEW PLANE DESIGNATED THE A-11--NOW THE YF-12A--AN ADVANCED, TRIPLE-SONIC EXPERIMENTAL JET UNDERGOING TESTS TO DETERMINE ITS CAPABILITIES AS A LONG-RANGE INTERCEPTOR.

THE A-11 (OR YF-12A) WAS STARTED IN 1959, MR. JOHNSON SAID, WHEREAS THE SR-71 PROJECT WAS NOT UNDERTAKEN UNTIL FEBRUARY, 1963.

THE STRIKING SIMILARITY OF THE TWO PLANES WAS IMMEDIATELY APPARENT AND IT WAS OBVIOUS THE RECONNAISSANCE VERSION WAS A MODIFICATION OF THE INTERCEPTOR AND NOT AN ENTIRELY NEW PLANE.

BOTH AIRCRAFT ARE BUILT BY LOCKHEED AND BOTH INCORPORATE THE DOUBLE-DELTA WING DEVELOPED BY THE COMPANY'S TOP ENGINEER, CLARENCE (KELLY) JOHNSON.

SAID TO BE CAPABLE OF PHOTOGRAPHING IN MINUTE DETAIL A 30-MILE-WIDE SWATH OF COUNTRY BETWEEN COASTS IN LESS THAN AN HOUR, THE SR-71 IS REPORTEDLY HEAVIER, SLIGHTLY LARGER AND LONGER RANGING THAN ITS INTERCEPTOR SISTER, THE YF-12A.

A MEASURE OF THE PERFORMANCE OF BOTH PLANES IS SEEN IN THE

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FOUR WORLD SPEED AND ALTITUDE RECORDS SET BY THE YF-12A IN A SINGLE DAY AT EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE (MAY, 1965) TO RECAPTURE THE MARKS FROM RUSSIA.

WHILE THE SEARCH CONTINUED FOR THE MISSING SR-71, ANOTHER AIR FORCE SEARCH IN NEVADA ENDED WITH THE FINDING OF THE FIGHTER PILOT'S BODY SEVEN MILES SOUTHWEST OF CALIENTE (NEV.).

CAPT. GERALD W. BRANTLEY, 31, A VETERAN OF THE VIETNAM WAR, WAS KILLED WHEN HIS F-4D PHANTOM II JET FIGHTER CRASHED THURSDAY AFTERNOON IN SNOW-COVERED MOUNTAINS.

BRANTLEY, FATHER OF FOUR AND HOLDER OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS, WAS ON A ROUTINE TRAINING FLIGHT OUT OF NELLIS AFB, NEV., WITH HIS OBSERVER, CAPT. PETER ALBRECHT, 27. ALBRECHT EJECTED AND HIS BACK WAS SPRAINED IN A PARACHUTE LANDING."

2. FYI: RADIO AND TELEVISION COVERAGE IS VERY LIGHT SO FAR.

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